

~~TOP SECRET//COMINT//20291123~~

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**TRSID:** jithom5 **DTR:** 29-07-2005  
**QCSID:** **Text Review:**  
**INAME:** KNAPP, Theresa G.; Mrs. Knapp's Daughter ?Yvonne?  
**Text w/Tape:**  
**IPLACE:** National Cryptologic Museum, Ft. Meade, MD  
**VIEWER:** LEUMAS, Carmella A. [REDACTED]

[Tape 1, Side 1]

**Leumas:** Today is the 11th of August, 1999. We are in the National Cryptologic Museum interviewing Ms. Theresa Knapp who was a WAVE during World War II. Interviewers are Carmella Leumas and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THIS IS interview number 1999-67 and it will be UNCLASSIFIED in its entirety. [TR NOTE: She now addresses Mrs. Knapp.] Okay. Good morning Ms. Knapp. And she's brought her daughter with her. (B% So if there are any other strange voices)... [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.]

**Knapp:** Good morning.

**Leumas:** Welcome. Thank you for coming. And we asked you here because, you know, you came by the museum and... and decided that there wasn't enough on WAVES in World War II. So... So we need to find out (B% what) was there.

**Knapp:** Well, there were a lot of us and we did do a lot. We... We enjoyed it, but we had some... we had some good adventures during the WAVES. And this... Prior... When we first... When they first set this up, we lived in hotels in D.C. And then, they built our quarters. And this is when they built it. These are our rules and regulations that we had. [TR NOTE: Sound of papers being shuffled or moved about, probably Ms. Knapp handing over photo(s) or documents to Ms. Leumas.]

**Leumas:** Oh, this is great.

**Knapp:** And... So...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: She laughs.] I bet! Let me ask you. Let's... Let's get a little background. Tell me about how you got there. You can... You know, we usually ask people where they were born and when they went to school and all this kind of stuff. And you don't have to give exact dates. But when... [TR NOTE: She chuckles.] You know, when you got into the service and how you decided to do this.

**Knapp:** Okay. Well, I was born in Alabama. But that kind of was... My family... All... Everybody else was born in New York. I'm the youngest of six. My parents just happened to be in Alabama when I was born. [TR NOTE: Both laugh.]

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And we went back to New York when I was nine months old. So I am really not a Southern [TR NOTE: Laughter heard], you know, by any of my memories or anything. And I went to Hunter in New York. And after that... I... I was doing statistical work for General Electric and... when I joined the WAVES. And I said that. They said, "Oh, well, you don't have to... You don't have to go to school. We're going to send you right to Washington." And they did it. They sent me right to Washington. I did not have any training. The rest of them went to Oklahoma. And then came back to Washington, and joined me. But I was already there unt...

**Leumas:** Well, you are... So you were a college graduate when you joined the WAVES?

**Knapp:** No, I wasn't. (1-2B)...

**Leumas:** No? Okay. So you had gone... You just, you know, gone to Hunter. So when did you join?

**Knapp:** I joined in January of '43.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And they were just setting this up. And they put us... As I... They put us in hotels down around Union Station. And they gave us little chits that the places took for food. Not... Some... (B% None) of them all happily. But it was a good time for us. And then, they... while they were building the WAVE quarters... And then we moved out there. And it was right out... right across from this... They took over a seminary – that had been a seminary there – on Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenue. And my biggest memory of that is sitting in these seats with straight back and straight (B% across) all day long, you know? I mean, your back... Even... even my young back hurt then. You know...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** How some churches don't have anything... ? You're not supposed to be comfortable.

**Leumas:** Right, right.

**Knapp:** And I guess in seminary you weren't supposed to be really... You really weren't supposed to...

**Leumas:** Not at all.

**Knapp:** But then, they built the quarters across from that. And we had two... We had two forms of identification that we wore around our neck. And they had... One had your... a picture on it and... with a description. And then the other one had place and a... It was where you could travel in... when you... when you got inside.

**Leumas:** Within the compound.

**Knapp:** Within the compound. And with different colors. And if you... I don't remember exactly what preceded what. But if you had green, you could only

go to green. And if you had yellow, you could go to green and yellow. And if you had red, you could go to... You know...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** That sort of thing. To get into our work area, we had to go through... First, we went to... through two Marines. And then we went into the office. And they checked us and... The Marines checked us. Then we went into the office. And we had to go through three (B% of these). So we went through the office and... and six Marine guards before we got to our place. Now these Marines joined up to be fighting, not to check out WAVES. They were not happy (3-4B by laughter). We had to do the same thing to go to lunch, except you didn't have to go through... And... And you never left the... You never left the compound. But you had to go through three areas of security to get from your office to the mess hall. And you never went outside. But you had to do this.

**Leumas:** Did they ever search you or... ? I mean, did they look in anything you were carrying? Do you remember?

**Knapp:** No.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** No, they never did. But one of the... one of the cardinal rules was that when you were not in the compound, you never, never, never left your two pieces of identification together. But one weekend, I was going home. And I was rushing, you know, to make the train. And I didn't have time to go back to the barracks. So, I just went. And of course, I had my two pieces with me. But I wasn't the only one. A lot of them did that, you know. But... And my pocketbook was stolen in the tr... on the train.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: She gasps.] Oh, no.

**Knapp:** And I lost everything – and... so then – until they got it all settled. And this went on for about three weeks. I had to go into the first security check. And they had to call my boss, who had to have already gotten to where he was going. And then he had to come back and go through it all and identify me and then come back. And this went on for about, I don't know, three to four weeks.

**Leumas:** Three to four weeks?

**Knapp:** He was a patient man. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** Who was your boss?

**Knapp:** He was a Mr. (B% Teerio). And he was a professor from Dartmouth, I... No. Princeton. I think he was a professor from Princeton. Ah... Very, very nice person.

**Leumas:** He wasn't in the service?

**Knapp:** No, he was...

**Leumas:** They just (1-2B)...

**Knapp:** He was... Yeah. But they just (1-2B) him. Now he was... You know, he was in the service then. But he was not in the service...

**Leumas:** Oh, okay.

**Knapp:** Yes. He was... He was... What was he? A lieutenant commander. maybe? I don't know what he was but... I've forgotten now. But yes – he was in the service, but not prior to...

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** You know, to the... Not prior to the war. We had to... When we were first went... When we were first recruited for this, they had to check, you know, your background. They did send Navy lieutenants to your home and to your areas and... and... check everybody and your neighbors and whatall. And... But they didn't tell them why. You know, when I got...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response,] [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Knapp:** I got this call from my mother. And she said, "Theresa, whatever you've done, you can come home." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] They had checked her employer. And this is how she found out about it. They didn't check with her. They just went to her employer and... who... You know... So naturally she thought something was really bad... wrong. But, ah...

**Leumas:** They still come (XB; very faint) [TR NOTE: She chuckles.]

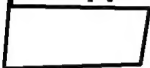


They still work that way.

**Knapp:**

They do?

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[TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** Hasn't changed.

**Knapp:**

And then one day... When we... When we first were... decided we were all going to stay there, you know... They had this huge, huge big room. Great, great, big, big table. And all... We all sat around it after we'd had our training, you know. And tried to... All the messages would come in from different areas, you know? The direction finders, you know, got them from all over. And we would pick out the good ones. And then the ones that were garbled... If we had a good copy, they would just start it. But the ones that didn't, then they would go into another room. And you'd work on it in there. And if they couldn't decode... you know, couldn't clear it up, then they'd send it into this third room. Eventually that's where I ended up – in this third room. But there were only five of us in there.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** My boss and the gal who logged them in and the three... three of us.

**Leumas:** Who worked on (B% it).

**Knapp:** And...

**Leumas:** Now I know Jennifer asked you earlier about the... the Bombe. So where was the Bombe in relation to where you worked? Would that have been at

the second level? Or... ?

**Knapp:** Hmmm... We didn't...

**Leumas:** You didn't have the Bombe there...

**Knapp:** No.

**Leumas:** At Nebraska Avenue?

**Knapp:** No, no.

**Leumas:** Okay. They only had it at Arlington Hall.

**Knapp:** No, we didn't have that (B% at all). We... We just got the... the messages there.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And (B% worked) them out. And...

**Leumas:** Did you have any idea where they were coming from? What they were before you started working on them? What kind of... ? What... ? What kind of indoctrination did they give you? What did they tell you before you started working (B% on them)?

**Knapp:** Once... Once we cleared security, they just told us what we were going to do. And... Everybody started out in this big long room. And then they shipped you from different places, you know. And... And some of them shipped... Just went out and... Because security was very, very, very tight. And they did tell us you had to be careful, too, when you were traveling in... on a bus or any... And...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: She chuckles.] Train.

**Knapp:** Yeah. And I was... One time, some man (B% stopped) next to me. And he was asking me... He says, "Now, you know, we really do know what you're doing over there." And, you know, that... And he went on, and on, and on. Whether he was... or whether they were testing me, I don't know. It could've been either one. But I just said nothing. And I said, "Oh really? You do? That's interesting," and... You know, that kind of thing. (B% But)... They were probably testing us.

**UnID:** (B% They might have been) (XG; very faint).

**Knapp:** Hmm?

**UnID:** (B% Might have been) (XG; again, very faint).

**Knapp:** Whatever.

**Leumas:** But it was on a public bus going home?

**Knapp:** Yes. It was on a... It was on a bus going to... going from downtown to the barracks.

**Leumas:** ~ Hmm.

**Knapp:** (1-2B). So...

**Leumas:** Okay. So you and two other ladies, (B% essentially), sat there and tried...

**Knapp:** And... And... And Mr. Teerio. He... He worked real hard. But he... It was...

**Leumas:** What kind of working aids did you all use?

**Knapp:** I'm sorry?

**Leumas:** Working aids. Or, you know, how did you start?

**Knapp:** We... The only thing we had was paper and pencil and ourselves.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.] And you didn't have any of the classes (B% that the OR except the) (2-3G; very faint).

**Knapp:** No. But I think mostly those classes were just indoctrinating you into the Navy (B% more). Because they were...

**Leumas:** Oh...

**Knapp:** I... I think so.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** But... We didn't even have shredders, you know. We had to just tear up what we didn't use. They didn't have shredders then. And we worked... I remem... I was just a kid. I think the day I grew up, this message had come in. And it was the Ba... The Midway Battle was going on. And Admiral (B% King) who was the Secretary of the Navy at the time... We only... Well, first, we only had this one message... one copy that was good. And they knew... You could tell a lot about a message before you read it. You could tell where it came from. And you could tell... You... You got to know what kind of a ship was sending it and if it (B% were a lot) and it was a convoy. You could tell an awful lot before you ever read it. So you get a lot of these coming and... "There's a convoy going some place." But anyway, he wanted this message. And he called up three times. And he said, "We need this." And I had been given it. And finally, I... And I... I really worked hard on it. And I... I just couldn't get it. And after a few hours, I just said... I took it over to Mr. (1-2G). I said, "I just can't get it," assuming he would take it.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** He said, "Okay, (B% throw it in the basket)." He said... And he called them up and said, "We can't get (1-2G)"

**Leumas:** Oh, dear.

**Knapp:** (B% You know? He) never, never 2-3G. I said, "Oh, my gosh!"

**Leumas:** Yeah (1G), you know, sometimes you just can't get it.

**Knapp:** I don't think I was ever a kid after that. [TR NOTE: Ms. Knapp laughs.]

**Leumas:** Yeah, I understand. Yeah.

**Knapp:** Well, the good news was that we did win that battle. So...

**UnID:** Yeah. [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Knapp:** Yeah. But... (2-3G; very faint)...



**Leumas:** So you worked on Nebraska Avenue?

**Knapp:** Yes.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And I brought some... [TR NOTE: Sound of paper being moved around or shuffled about, probably Ms. Knapp passing along photos.]

**Leumas:** Oh, look at that picture!

**Knapp:** Brought some pictures in.

**Daughter:** [TR NOTE: Addressing Ms. Leumas:] And I have her uniform, and I forgot it. But...

**Leumas:** Oh!

**Daughter:** I can bring it to you, if you're interested.

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Addressing her daughter:] Oh, they have... They have lots of uniforms, (1-2B).

**Leumas:** Oh, no, we don't. I think... I think we have (2-3B)...

**Knapp:** (XB by others speaking.)

**Leumas:** We'll have to ask...

**Daughter:** (B% I should have) seen it. It's a teeny, tiny little thing. [TR NOTE: Daughter laughs.]

**Leumas:** Oh, gee! [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Daughter:** I don't know how anybody ever fit in it! And I... I'm so sorry I didn't bring it.

**Leumas:** Well, they keep saying people were smaller in those days. [TR NOTE: She chuckles.]

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Referring to photo:] These are just some... Me with my friends. (B% Just) pictures. And this was when we were shipped out to California.

**Leumas:** Okay, so...

**Knapp:** (3-4B by shuffling of papers heard in background.)

**Leumas:** How long... How long did you work on Nebraska Avenue then?

**Knapp:** I worked on Nebraska Avenue until [TR NOTE: She pauses] January of '45?

**UnID:** So two years.

**Knapp:** Hmm?

**UnID:** Two years.

**UnID:** (2-3G)? (B% You weren't California that long then.)

**Leumas:** Okay. And then you went out to California. What was the reason for that? Why did they decide to...

**Knapp:** Well, the... the war... the war progressed. The further back we pushed the Japanese, the harder it was to get the messages. So you had to get closer to get the messages from them.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** And I wanted to go to the wes... I just wanted to see something else, too. And... And we were on a very, very small radio station there. And... And it was just...

**Leumas:** So you weren't (1-2B) a lot of traffic? Is that... ?

**Knapp:** No, we... It was more... It was too garbled because it was too far away. You know?

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** But, then we... By that time, we were reading... we were reading the pictures. It was like an x-ray of the messages. And you could tell what kind of a ship did it... You could even tell if they transferred radiomen from... Because each one had his own little thing...

**Leumas:** Ah, yeah. [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.] They... They all say that about a signature...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** Sort of. That (2-3B).

**Knapp:** And we were... My new work, we were measuring to see how far it was in millimeters. Measuring the dots and the dashes.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** And you could tell where they were, who is going, and if they transferred so many and they would come. And... And you could tell if they were going pick up a convoy or... and where they were going, you know, meet. You could tell a lot from that. But it was very hard on your eyes. And out there, we worked... Well, we always worked eight on and eight off. Anyplace we went, we worked eight hours on/eight hours off. And... Hmm. Do they still do that? When... When it gets real busy, they do. They put you on twelve on, twelve off; twelve on, twelve off. The time (2-3G)... It's just twelve hours (3-4G), but it's the same concept. (B% So you're really working twice in one day.)

**Knapp:** Yeah. But... I was... And we'd start at three. We went... We'd work from three to eleven. And then we'd be off until seven. And then we would work until three. And then... I was alright until I got on that eleven to eight. After (2-3G)... That was rough. You know? [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] Used to go and get the ice water and put it on your eyes so you could see... so you could stay awake! And then you're reading this little fine thing. And, oh! But we had... we had fun. And we... It was a... This radio station we were on at that time was very, very small.

**Daughter:** Where were you, Mom... ?

**Leumas:** Do you (B% know OR remember) (1-2B)... ?

**Knapp:** Imperial Beach. That's where I met that... And we... When we went there, there were just twelve of us that went out there. Well, they... they had to move... We lived in tents. And they had to move the sailors out. And they put



them on the beach. And we we... Actually, we this kind of a... very rough building. And then, every night, they have (B% that) movies, because that's the only thing they had. And we're trying... we're working eight on and eight off. And the only thing that separated us from the movie was a curtain.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] So that was after you got out to California?

**Knapp:** That was after we got out to California.

**Leumas:** Okay. And at that point, you all were still doing Japanese traffic?

**Knapp:** Yes. We did all Japanese down there. I didn't work on anything else until we went to northern California. And that was... That was in April of '45. They sent us up.

**Leumas:** Okay. Now, you said you met your husband while you were at Imperial Beach?

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** Did you all ever get days off? Like if you were working... ?

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah. After... Yeah.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** After so many rotations...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** You'd get days off. Okay.

**Daughter:** Well, my dad was a...

**Knapp:** Yeah, he wa...

**Daughter:** In the Navy as well. He was a radio operator. (2-3B)...

**Knapp:** Yeah, he was a radio (B% ops) (1B).

**Leumas:** Oh! Okay.

**Knapp:** And he... he copied the Japanese code. "Kana," they called it.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** Yeah, he was (B% in the)...

**Leumas:** Oh, so...

**Knapp:** (B% Space with us).

**Leumas:** He brought you the traffic then?

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] That was convenient. [TR NOTE: More laughter.]

**Knapp:** Well, we were in separate buildings. But... Yeah. There were... We had small buildings. But it was very, very informal there because... You know, you were just your own little group. And after my husband was shipped

out... And... He went... He was going... He stopped... He had a weekend in San Francisco. So he called me and he said, "If you can get off, I have the weekend off." So I went to the captain because he was in charge. And I said, "I'd really like a..." And I need 72 hours to get there and back. (B% He says, "Well..." He says, "I can't gi..." And he's captain. And he says, "I can't give you a 72-hour pass," because of some restriction or something. He says, "But I'll give you two 48's. But if you get caught, you're on your own." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** Were y... You all were married by this time?

**UnID:** That's pretty (2-3B)...

**Knapp:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. We were married. Yeah.

Okay. Well, that's a pretty fair solution, (B% I guess). [TR NOTE: Ms. Knapp laughs.]

**Leumas:** Yeah! That... Creative thinking, you know, on his part.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** And your husband got shipped out to... ?

**Knapp:** To Hawaii.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And... So they could (XB; very faint).

**Leumas:** And you stayed. So you were still there. And they... What kind of... ? Did they have any restrictions on marriage between people... ? I know other people have said... Were you all both enlisted people. Or... ?

**Knapp:** Yes.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** We were... The... The only restriction they had was we had... We were... We were going to be married in... on April 12th in New York. And we both had leave to go to... to go. And then he was... He got his orders to be shipped out. So he was given ten days immediately. And I could only go... I could only get ten days to go with him as his wife, not to become his wife.

**Leumas:** Ah!

**Knapp:** So they wouldn't give us both... to go.

**Leumas:** Ah.

**Knapp:** So we... We were married there and then left. But they couldn't do that today. So... And... And this... This is a medal we were given. But I don... I mean, the kids haven't even seen this. But we... I couldn't tell anybody we got it.

**Leumas:** Was that a cryptologic service pin?

**Knapp:** Yeah, yeah.

**Leumas:** Oh, boy.

**Daughter:** She had a letter in (1-2G; very faint)...

**Knapp:** I have a letter, but I don't know where it is. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Daughter:** And so, she can't tell anybody about it.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** Here's this... Here's this pin that you can't (1-2G; very faint)... This is great.

**UnID:** (XB; very low; very faint.)

**Leumas:** That must have been...

**Daughter:** Tell her how you got it. That's the best story.

**Knapp:** That... [TR NOTE: Shuffling of paper heard; probably Ms. Knapp passing along a document to Ms. Leumas.]

**Leumas:** Oh, okay. That... Yeah, how did you get this? And that must've been hard. What did you tell your mother afterwards? After she said, "Whatever you've done, you can come home."? And then you didn't go home. So, um...

**Knapp:** Ah, I said, "Mom, don't... don't worry. There's nothing," I said, "They're just..." I don't know what I told her. But she... [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] (B% Maybe it) wasn't so, you know, (3-4G; very faint)...

**Leumas:** So how... How did you get the pin?

**Knapp:** Well, the Ja... As I told you, the Japanese changed their entry into the code frequently. I mean...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** Because they couldn't... They neve... They couldn't change the code and they didn't have the facilities to get new codebooks every place, you know. So they changed their entry into it. And when... We weren't... When... When that changed, everything changed. We couldn't... So we just worked on trying to break that. And we broke it in our little room.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** So that was a big... That was a big deal, because they were working on that all over. Not just in our group – every place.

**Leumas:** Right.

**Knapp:** Because it was very... They needed it... that. And... And...

**Leumas:** And it told them how the... (1-2G) codes were going to change. Yeah.

**Knapp:** Yeah. So everything... Yeah, we... So we wer... So we were back to business then.

**Leumas:** And... And you did that with pencil and paper?

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And... That was all we had.

**Leumas:** That's amazing. So, okay. So then, there you are in Southern California. Your husband shipped out. Um, you're still doing Japanese traffic. And how... ?

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** And then... In April, you went up to Northern California? Or... ?

**Knapp:** In May, I went up to Northern California.

**Leumas:** (B% May).

**Knapp:** And we were working on the... on the Russian (2-3G).

**Leumas:** (B% Was it) up near... in Sonoma?

**Knapp:** Yeah. Up in wine country. We were way out in the boondocks. We had sheep grazing right outside our door. [TR NOTE: She chuckles.] But, you know when they have captain's inspection on Saturday morning... And the commander of the base – which was a very, very large base...

**Leumas:** What base was it?

**Knapp:** I thought you'd ask me that. I can't remember that.

**Leumas:** Sorry. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Knapp:** It was... And it was a permanent... Was it... ?

**Leumas:** Oh, we can find it.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** It's in... in Sonoma Valley?

**Knapp:** Out... And on every Saturday morning, he and his entourage would ride out. And we would just... He'd knock, and we'd say, "Everything is secure," but he wasn't allowed in. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** "Everything is secure. Just take our word for it." [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Knapp:** Believe me, he didn't like that.

**Daughter?:** Is it because you were women? Or is it because you were so high...


**Knapp:** No, because it was SECRET. And he wasn't...

**Daughter?:** SECRET. So he wasn't allowed...

**Knapp:** He wasn't cleared.


**Daughter?:** He wasn't cleared.

**Knapp:** And he wasn't cleared.

 He was just the commander of the base taking care of the base. But he wasn't in the field.

**Knapp:** Right. [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** So that was the...  
(2-3B) (B% women)...



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**Leumas:** That was the guy who... who made life difficult for you guys?

**Knapp:** Oh, he made life hell for us. [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Leumas:** Tell those stories again. Because you... you had said that. But we weren't on tape.

**Knapp:** Well, he was... You know, we were all reserve. I mean, and the...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** Most of the men in our system were... in our group were reserve, too. And everybody that we had and... Because the women were all reserve.

**Leumas:** So how big a group was that at that time? Do you remember?

**Knapp:** That base that we... ?

**Leumas:** Or, you know, your little group. Your cryptologic group.

**Knapp:** Oh, our cryptologic group?

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** Let's see. Maybe... Maybe twenty in the... in the... Right where we were.

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** You know?

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** And he was a regular... a career Navy man who had come up from the ranks. So he kind of looked down his... You know, he didn't think we were very much s... And when he wasn't allowed in our area, he was offended. And I don't blame him. I mean... [TR NOTE: Ms. Knapp laughs.] So we had to take a bus to get from the main terminal to our... our workplace. And where we lived. And so, he ran the buses an hour after our watch started. And he served the meals an hour before we got off in the mess hall.

**Leumas:** So how did you all eat? I mean, you... I'm... I'm sure you didn't starve to death out there. [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Knapp:** Oh, no, we didn't starve to death. We, you know, ate a lot of cold junk and... And we were young and used what money we had because, you know, we only... we didn't make a whole lot of money then. Went to town and... But we made out. We... You know, he didn't starve us. He just made us most uncomfortable. [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] So... So it was our fault. But...

**Leumas:** Well, it wasn't your fault.

**Knapp:** You know? And... And that's just human nature. So... And...

**Leumas:** So then, you started working on the Russian (B% problems). And that was still during the war?

**Knapp:** Oh, yes.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah. And...

**Leumas:** That was...

**Knapp:** They were much more sophisticated. They were on tape by that time.

**Leumas:** Oh, yeah?

**Knapp:** They were... And... [TR NOTE: Long pause.] They were...

**Leumas:** (B% And you still used paper) (1-2G) (B% for the Russian)... ?

**Knapp:** Yeah. That's... And that's all we had.

**Leumas:** Hmm.

**Knapp:** That's what we had. That's what we used. So...

**Leumas:** The... Well, Jennifer's working on a story on the Bombe. And I know that the... the WACS worked on the Bombe. And they had built this machine that (B% would)... could decrypt the Enigma.

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah. Well, the Enigma was a machine itself.

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** But the Japanese didn't have that.

**Leumas:** Right.

**Knapp:** And the Enigma mostly was in Europe.

**Leumas:** Yeah. That was in German (1-2B)...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

[redacted] The Japanese had, what? Red?

**Leumas:** They had Red... PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

[redacted] Red and...

**Leumas:** And Purple.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

[redacted] And (B% they had) Purple.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** And the Russians, they didn't... I don't know what they were using.

**Knapp:** Well, they were using some sort of a... It came as... through to us on tape.

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** But...

**Leumas:** But we were still formally their allies, right? That had to be...

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah. (1-2B)...

**Leumas:** That had to be part of the secrecy reason, right?


**Knapp:** Well... Well, we... You know, we... We listened to the English and we listened to the French. And you know... I'm sure we still do, you know? I mean, (B% Israel)... We just (2-3G) them. I mean, things don't change. You know? You don't trust anybody. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] If you want to



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erase any of this, you can.

**Leumas:** No, no. Absolutely not.

 No, you can talk all you want to. That's... Yeah, that's not... (B% declassified).

**Knapp:** No, I mean, but we... You don't trust (B% anyone). And we certainly shouldn't have trusted the Russians anyway.

**Daughter:** Well, my Dad still thinks it's classified. He won't talk about (1-2G).

**Leumas:** Oh, really?

**Daughter:** [TR NOTE: Addressing her mother:] He's a riot, isn't he?

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Daughter:** He talks about it a little bit more than ever before. But growing up, he wouldn't tell any stories. He told them he wouldn't tell – and he wasn't telling. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** Well, a lot of this stuff wasn't declassified until...

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Numerous individuals talking over one another here.] Oh, well, we... didn't... I didn't say much.

**Leumas:** That's correct.

**Daughter:** Yeah. They wouldn't talk even though...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Daughter:** It was hilarious.

**Leumas:** But you can assure him that most of the World War II stuff is...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Daughter:** We tried, but still... [TR NOTE: She laughs.] He...

**Leumas:** Did he come to the museum? [TR NOTE: She laughs.]

**Knapp:** No, he didn't. He...

**Daughter:** No, I was trying to get him...

**Knapp:** He has trouble walking.

**Daughter:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** We... [TR NOTE: Addressing her daughter:] I don't even know if we ever told you this. After the war, they wrote Dad and asked him to come back into the Navy. And... By that time, you know, he had gone back to college and had gotten his degree. So he said no. And, you know, they ask you to update. And he said no, he... he wasn't interested. And then they wrote and said, "Well, would you come back as an officer?" And he said no, he really wasn't. So then... [TR NOTE: Ms. Knapp laughs.] So then they said, "Well, would you come back and work in civil service?" And he said... And so he wrote back, he said, yeah, he would do this – when we were in West Virginia. And then they wrote and said, "Well, we're sorry. But Congress

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won't appropriate the money." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] So...

**Leumas:** And what year was that?

**Knapp:** That was '46/'47.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** Yeah, he might have ended up here.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** What did he end up... ?

**Knapp:** A teacher.

**Leumas:** He was a teacher?

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** As a tea... Okay. And...

**Knapp:** As is Yvonne [TR NOTE: Probably the daughter in the room] and is our ol...  
our other, older daughter.

**Daughter?:** (XG; very faint).

**Leumas:** And so, how long did you stay in Sonoma – lovely Sonoma?

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah. It was... It's beautiful, beautiful country.

**Leumas:** I've been there. It's gorgeous. Yes.

**Knapp:** Yeah, yeah.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** I was there until November. You know, when... When the war was over, you  
got points for what you had done and where you had been.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Knapp:** And (1-2G). So I said yes, I wanted out. They did want me to stay. And I  
said, "No, I... I think I want go home and..." Yeah. Think I got out in  
November.

**Leumas:** Of '45?

**Knapp:** '45. And they... I was looking on my discharge the other day. And I looked  
and they sent me home... To get me back to New York from Napa, they  
gave me ninety dollars.

**Leumas:** Ninety dollars? Did that do it? Do you remember?

**Knapp:** I... Well, I had a sister in California. So I went and stayed with her for a while.  
And then I eventually went home. We had... Probably did. I'm sure it did.

**Daughter:** Now the train story: was that when you and Dad were on your ten-day  
honeymoon?

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Daughter:** Tell that story. It's a hilarious one.

**Leumas:** Ten-day honeymoon. So you got married...

**Knapp:** We got married...

**Leumas:** Before you went to (1-2B) New York. And that.

**Knapp:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. We had to...

**Leumas:** When... When did you get married? What... What was your... ?

**Knapp:** In... March 29th, 1945.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And we had to... And the... And the chaplain had to give us a letter saying that we were married and that we could stay in the same room in a hotel if we wanted. And hotels did ask you for them.

**Leumas:** Oh, okay.

**Knapp:** We had to change trains [sic] stations in Chicago. Well, first of all, we were sitting up (1-2G). And I was so dirty when I got there. You had to... you have to go cross-country in those... The trains, you know... No... No air conditioning. And the windows opened. And... Oh! [TR NOTE: She sighs.] It's just... It was just plain dirty. And you were lucky if you got a seat because people were sitting on the floor and all over. So we had to change train stations in Chicago. So we took a cab from one to the other. And he says, "Now, Terry, somebody's liable to steal your purse if you fall asleep. So I've got to carry everything." Doesn't that sound like Dad? "So I'll take care of everything." "Okay." Well, he loses his wallet in the cab. So we get on the train. We have no money. We have no papers. And we're in uniform.

**Leumas:** Oh. Your certificate, your marriage...

**Knapp:** Nothing!

**Leumas:** It's all gone now.

**Knapp:** It's gone now. Every time... And the Shore Patrol and the MP's went up and down the trains all the time. And every time we'd see them, we'd have to hurry to the restroom and hide. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] Ah, yeah. And that was our honeymoon. Every time we saw one, we had to hide. And they did... The USO would give you doughnuts on this... And that's what we ate. We had nothing. So I... So...

**Leumas:** You had your train tickets, though? You got on that second train.

**Knapp:** Yes. Well, our... I... I don't know how we did that. We did have our train ticket, yeah. It probably didn't fit in his wallet. But that's what we had to do. We had to... And the only thing we had to eat were doughnuts. I still... I'm not really fond of doughnuts to this day. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** Well, I'm glad I brought muffins. [TR NOTE: More laughter.] (B% We have) muffin. (B% Have a) muffin.

**Knapp:** After that... So we decided, well, if that's the way you start out life, maybe

you'll make it. But that was the start of our married life.

**Leumas:** And that was when you lost your badges and had to come back. And... and didn't have your badges for three weeks.

**Knapp:** No, no. That was a different story.

**Leumas:** No?

**Knapp:** No, that was different.

**Leumas:** Oh, dear.

**Knapp:** That was...

**Leumas:** Oh, okay.

**Knapp:** That was long before I had met him.

**Leumas:** Oh, okay.

**Daughter:** (XG; probably Ms. Knapp's daughter.)

**Knapp:** Yeah. So then, when we got... You know, when we got home, we were able to get some money and wire for new papers. So we had the few days to get that done. But...

**Leumas:** So on your way back, you had your papers?

**Knapp:** Yeah. We still had to sit up on the dirty ol' train. But...

**Leumas:** At least you didn't have to go hide in the bathroom every time.

**Knapp:** No, we didn't have to hide. [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] We'd keep our eye out, each one of us. And say, "Here he comes!" And, actually, I think he was in more trouble than I was because they were more likely to go into the men's room. But they wouldn't have gone into the ladies room at all.

**Leumas:** No.

**Knapp:** But they didn't catch us. [TR NOTE: She laughs.] So we were alright.

**Leumas:** When... ? When you got out of the service in... in California, your husband was still overseas then?

**Knapp:** Yes, yeah.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** Yeah. He... He didn't get back until some time in the spring. April or maybe May.

**Leumas:** And so, you went back home to New York. Was he from that area, too?

**Knapp:** No. He was from West Virginia.

**Leumas:** Oh, okay.

**Knapp:** He went back to... He had had three years of college. So when he went back to West Virginia University... And finished up there. And then later, he went to Columbia in New York and got his master's there. And we stayed in New York. You know? But he didn't like New York and I didn't like West

Virginia. So we settled in Maryland.

**Leumas:** Oh, wow. And... And did either one of you ever investigate working for the Agency out here, afterwards?

**Knapp:** No, no. After Congress wouldn't appropriate the money... [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] But we thought, "Gee, they, you know, they really are interested. They really do want him." But, no.

**Leumas:** I'm sure they could've used him. Both of you. It's a... You know...

**Daughter?:** I'm sure the Social Security Administration was doing something completely different.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Daughter:** You were a federal employee.

**Knapp:** Yeah. I did work with...

**Leumas:** Did you go back to statistics?

**Knapp:** No, I... Well, it... It helped. You know? I... I was claims representative for (1-2G). You just work with numbers and all. And of course, the Japanese code was all numbers.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** You know? And... I've always kind of worked with numbers. There's a big joke in the family that I'm terrible about names. Absolutely terrible. But I can remember any number I ever hear. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] Isn't that... that stupid?

**Leumas:** It's just the way your brain works. And it was very useful during that time, obviously. Well, what was the... ? What was the worst thing that you can remember about... ? I know that that's... [TR NOTE: Long pause.]

**Knapp:** I think the worst thing was probably when you know... when they needed that message. And (B% we) couldn't get it. That... And... And (XG; very faint). You know, men's lives depend on this. And I failed.

**Leumas:** And obviously, there were a lot of high points...

**Knapp:** Oh, yeah.

**Leumas:** Along the way.

**Knapp:** Yes, yes. The... We... We had a lot of high points when they would come down and congratulate us when... when we had done something good. You know? It's a good feeling when you know you've done something well.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** Yeah. I... I wouldn't trade that experience for anything. That was a wonderful experience when you're young and...

**Leumas:** Feel like you can contribute that much...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** That... That was the big, big...

**Knapp:** Yeah, yeah.

**Leumas:** Thing to be able to do at that age.

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** And for a female, because...

**Knapp:** Yeah. We were... I... And... I think my family was proud of me.

**Leumas:** Still are.

**Knapp:** Well, this family (B% appreciates) (1-2G). My grandson was telling me just the other day... [TR NOTE: Addressing her daughter:] Did I tell you what Griff said the other day? Griff is her son. Her oldest son. I was... My name was Theresa Griffin. And his name is Griffin. But... He goes to school at Mary Washington College. And his history teacher was telling them... And saying something. He said, "Well, they didn't know if we ever tracked the Russians or when we started tracking Russians. If they did it back then." And he said, "I just raised my hand..." You have to understand my grandson to know this. He said, "I just raised my hand and told them that my grandmother did that," and says, "Yes, we did that back in World War II." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** Well, good. I'm glad he was able to clarify that for his history professor. [TR NOTE: She chuckles.] He has to do some more reading: that professor.

[REDACTED] Actually... Because all that information is unclassified.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.] PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

**Knapp:** Yeah, but it was classified (1-2B)...

**Leumas:** It was classified for a long time.

[REDACTED] Yeah. Yeah, but if the professor wanted to further his knowledge...

**Leumas:** Exactly.

[REDACTED] It's available. (XG; very faint.)

**Leumas:** That's right.

**Knapp:** Well, Griff let him know what the situation was. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** And... But... But we need to get, you know, stories like this. And we appreciate you coming...

**Knapp:** Well... But...

**Leumas:** And... And telling... telling us your story.

**Daughter?:** Has anyone... ? Did you know that there was a group that sat in a room that just worked (3-4G)? (XG)?

**Leumas:** We had heard those sorts of things from other people who worked around it. And that... You know, like, maybe the people who were in the second level room or the... or the outer rooms or the Marine people. Because we have



interviewed a lot of people on... We have more things from Arlington Hall from the ASA types, because that was more directly our predecessor.

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** And... And our... our stories about the Navy are not as well documented. The Navy, though – NSG – has a lot of that history that... that we don't have. (B% They have a) (1-2G) history...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

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And (B% oral) history department.

**Leumas:** Yeah, they have a big one. And they tend to keep that stuff...

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** To themselves, you know?

**Daughter?:** Now Dad would have (XG)? He was (2-3G)?

**Knapp:** No, he was a... He was a direction finder. And he was expert in Kana, which was the Japanese code. When he typed, he kan... he typed Japanese as they... You know...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** He would listen and type the Japanese kana. But...

**Leumas:** Right. Let's see. What would we call him today? Information analyst or a transcriber or a...

Transcriber. Yeah.

**Knapp:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.] He tells an interesting story of one of his very close friends... When they were going out to Hawaii... When they were being shipped out... And of course, they were shipped on a regular Navy transporter...

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.] Let me stop this... [TR NOTE: Audio abruptly stops here. When it resumes, Ms. Knapp is speaking as follows:]

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** Okay. This is back. So we were talking about your husband's trip out (B% to)...

**Knapp:** And this other... This other sailor was a radioman, too. And they were both going out to Hawaii to, you know, to another OP-20-G station.

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** And the radiomen onboard ship... One of them got sick. And so, they grabbed this other man and said, "You're a radioman first class. Get down there and take this." And of course, he wasn't trained for that. And didn't know how. And he said, well, he couldn't do that. And then, anyway, they took him. And we... we never heard or saw from... ever since. Nobody ever heard from him again. He never got up with the group or anything.

**Leumas:** Oh, really? He was stuck on... ? He... ?

**Knapp:** He was...

**Leumas:** Left on that ship?

**Knapp:** Yep.

**Leumas:** Ah.

**Knapp:** That was the end of him as far as we were concerned.

**Leumas:** Oh, my goodness.

**Knapp:** Nobody ever heard from him.

**Leumas:** Things were rather informal in those days. They... You didn't need your orders cut 60 days or...

**Knapp:** Oh, no.

**Leumas:** Ninety days before you... [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**UnID:** No.

**Knapp:** Now, when we were going out to California... When we were first being shipped out to California, you had something... They called them... They weren't actually train tickets. The people on the train had been informed... The train station...

**Leumas:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** Had been informed you were coming. And they... I've forgotten what they called them. But anyway, we went. And we did find until we got to... No. We were going out of Washington. And they said, well, they didn't have any rooms for us. We were supposed to have a room. And they didn't have any – but when we got to Albuquerque, we would get one. But they didn't have anything. We'd have to stand up until we got to Albuquerque.

**Leumas:?** Stand up!

**Knapp:** And we were in Washington, D.C.

**Leumas:** On the train?

**Knapp:** On the train.

**Leumas:** Okay.

**Knapp:** And I said, "No, we're not going to do that." So he said, "Well, we can't take you on this train. You just can't..." And I said, "Well, we're going." So I said, "Come on. We're going." And we... Twelve of us got on there. And they just didn't like this. So they said, "Ah... Oh, we've got to go with these women." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] "What... What are we going to do?" So the trainmen... And they had... all had bunks and everythi... So they gave us their room.

**Leumas:** Oh!

**Knapp:** They didn't know what else to do with us. So they gave us their room. [TR

NOTE: She chuckles.]

**Leumas:?** They couldn't take up passengers, right? The rest...

**Knapp:** No. So we got... Well, there were... Most... There weren't too many civilian passengers on... during the war...

**Leumas:** Oh, okay. Yeah.

**Knapp:** At all. The service had pretty much taken over the railroad. So... Then when we got to Albuquerque, they did... we could get our (B% own OR room). So... [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.]

**Leumas:** So they got their room.

**Knapp:** That's what they sa... He went up and down. He says, "Alright. You can have ours." [TR NOTE: She laughs.] You had... You had to be young and...

**Lowe:** Yeah.

**Knapp:** You had to be reckless and...

**[Redacted]** And flexible.

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**Knapp:** Flexible. That's right! [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] That's right. You had to (B% definitely) be flexible. Yeah.

**Leumas:** Ah, well...

**Knapp:** Alright...

**Leumas:** Well, it's a good thing you brought your daughter because she prodded you in...

**Knapp:** Yeah.

**Leumas:** In stuff that we wouldn't have known to ask.

**Daughter:** I'm trying to think if there's anything else. Like I said, they wouldn't talk about it very much. Dad wouldn't talk about it at all. Mom would tell funny stories, but wouldn't, like, you know, like make the trip across country. But she wouldn't really tell anything (B% cool), you know, like what they were doing or anything. [TR NOTE: She chuckles.] Just they got married and they had to eat doughnuts.

**Leumas:** [TR NOTE: She laughs.] And... So... So what did you think when you came here? And how did you find out about it?

**Daughter:** I've... I... I have a friend who told me about it. I was like, "Well, I'd like to take my mother there."

**Knapp:** (B% Frances) comin... wanted me to come. She goes (2-3G). She says, "Terry, we have to go see that." So when our... my older daughter was here, the three of us just came over. And I saw you didn't have that much information about us at all.

**Leumas:** Right, I know. And... And the Navy has a nice museum down... at Suitland, isn't it?

**UnID:** [TR NOTE: Affirmative response.]

**Leumas:** And you might want to look there.

**Knapp:** Yeah...

**Leumas:** They don't have a lot. Their... Their stuff... I better... I better turn this off now, because the transcribers are going to give us headaches. But thank you again for (B% traveling) (-2G)... [TR NOTE: Audio abruptly stops here.]

**[End of Interview OH-1999-67-KNAPP]**